

Watershed Moments

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>> NANCY HOTCHKISS: Our aquarium opened in 1981 and we were really trying to move from basic biology to including conservation messages. As we've moved through the years, we've realized that those conservation messages have to be ones that aren't necessarily depressing because you can tell people how many species are disappearing or how many acres of rain forest are disappearing and all that will leave them with is a gloom and doom feel.

So we've now moved into the empowerment and behavior change that you can make a difference.

>> EVA HUGHES: Well the good news is, there's plenty you can do and you're probably doing some of already. How many of you recycle?

>> NANCY HOTCHKISS: You're trying to figure out what are the specific things we can ask people to do. You want them to be things that they feel capable of and things where they can see a difference.

For years we've been telling kids if you want to save the rain forest recycle aluminum cans. Well fine. They're recycling and then they look at the news and go well the rain forest is still disappearing so you've lost your credibility.

The Chesapeake Watershed, that's the area we really want to have an impact on.

>> LAURA BANKEY: Watershed is a new term for a lot of people. They don't really understand what it means so it's our chance to make that connection between where they live, what they do in their own backyards and the water that surrounds everybody here in the Chesapeake Bay.

>> NANCY HOTCHKISS: We knew we had an end in mind, which was how can we impact people's behavior, conservation behavior. But we didn't have a methodology in mind and that was what was I think the interesting request to IMLS was we said trust on this journey.

Our auditorium was an underutilized resource. We didn't know if we wanted to do a media piece or a theatre piece, puppetry, Kabuki theatre, I don't know. We weren't quite sure.

>> MALE SPEAKER: Lurking in the murky water is the prehistoric sturgeon.

>> NANCY HOTCHKISS: And we did some formative evaluation with visitors as we were going through this to see how do you get people to change their behavior. We know we can do programs. We know we can make people be entertained and engaged but how do we have a longer term impact? That was our big question.

>> LISA LERNER: We asked our visitors, there were eight different choices to kind of select the ones that they currently do and set them aside. Many people did recycle your trash, throw litter in the trashcan, or pick up trash that you find. We said okay those are the things you do now. Just set them to the side. That left you a couple more options.

We asked them to look at those options and kind of put them in order of the next actions that they could take to help the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

>> EVA HUGHES: Take a moment. Turn to the people next to you, behind you, in front of you and say hello to your watershed neighbors.

Everyone who was involved with this program put their heart and soul into the production.

Wooo! I am just crazy about sturgeon. I think I am their number one fan.

It's definitely more theatrical. It takes a lot of energy to get the program to where it needs to be.

They're completely out of the water onto the decks and boats
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>> DARREN CARTER: My favorite part was Stuey (Ph) the sturgeon. I'll tell you why. We have an exhibit here that's called The Surviving Exhibit. I like looking at the sturgeons because they remind me of prehistoric fishes years ago. So when Stuey (Ph) came here I was like oh boy there was connection there.

>> EVA HUGHES: We are all going to be reciting a watershed pledge on behalf of Stuey (Ph) the sturgeon.

>> LAURA BANKEY: Watershed moments actually has a part in it near the end where we ask them to do a specific activity so that they are more inclined to go back and change how they handle their everyday lives.

>> EVA HUGHES: I can pick up trash.

>> CHILDREN: I can pick up trash.

>> EVA HUGHES: I can plant trees.

>> CHILDREN: I can plant trees.

>> EVA HUGHES: We can all do something.

>> CHILDREN: We can all do something.

>> EVA HUGHES: To protect the watershed.

>> CHILDREN: To protect the watershed.

>> EVA HUGHES: This was an excellent audience. They were very enthusiastic to be there. Rowdy but not too rowdy and they definitely got the point of the program.

And so now you're probably asking yourself so what can I do, right? Right?

>> CHILDREN: Right!

>> EVA HUGHES: I thought so.

>> DARREN CARTER: I never was aware of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. I wasn't aware of what some of the things I was doing was affecting the bay; fertilizing my lawn. I never thought hey that's going to wash down in the bay. As I gradually got

involved with Watershed I said hey something is wrong here. I shouldn't be doing this.

>> NANCY HOTCHKISS: The original audience that we focused on was families with children because we also know in some studies that kids in that age level are the drivers of environmental action in the family. There's nothing more heartbreaking than having a small child look at their parents and go why aren't we recycling?

The program then morphed into a school group program and then the opportunity came up to convert the theatre to a 4D theatre which is a revenue generator. It doesn't just generate revenue. It generates a lot.

>> DARREN CARTER: When they come in they want to know about the dolphin show, where's the 4D, where's the place to eat at and when you try to take them off that path sometimes it gets a little difficult.

>> NANCY HOTCHKISS: So at first we were going to keep Watershed Moments in there at the same time so you had your choice of going to one of those 4D special effect programs or we would still have Watershed Moments and it just became abundantly clear that it wasn't going to survive in that format.

We had to take a step back and then look at how we were going to do this in some other ways.

>> LISA LERNER: All right. Are you familiar with how many states are incorporated in the Watershed?

>> MALE SPEAKER: Ah, three?

>> LISA LERNER: Three. Look, I'll give you a hint back here.

>> MALE SPEAKER: Oh wait, oh seven.

>> LISA LERNER: We've got six. Yep, six. It goes all the way up in Cooperstown New York.

>> MALE SPEAKER: Wow!

>> LISA LERNER: So even though we don't put our toes all the way in the bay most days even what happens in our backyard affects what happens in the Chesapeake Bay so we're all part of the larger watershed. If it rains all the way from New York or

Pennsylvania and West Virginia it all ends up out here in the Chesapeake Bay. We will thanks for participating and putting your mark on the map.

>> NANCY HOTCHKISS: As we prepared our current dolphin show, we added in a secondary narrator.

>> VICTORIA MEADOWS: We must all help to protect the waters where dolphins and other creatures live.

>> NANCY HOTCHKISS: And the conservation message is you may be asking what can you do to help. Well here are a few things and they're taken directly from Watershed Moments.

>> VICTORIA MEADOWS: Here are a few suggestions and you're probably doing some of these already. First, dispose of your trash properly so it doesn't get into those waterways which lead into the ocean.

I'm very happy to hear they are concerned. Oh you have these magnificent animals but how can we help save their counterparts out in the ocean? So they actually come up to us saying well what else can we do?

Plant native trees and shrubs because they use less fertilizer. Too much fertilizer can run off into waterways.

>> NANCY HOTCHKISS: We've also used that transforming experience journey in a lot of other projects.

>> FEMALE SPEAKER: And this one here is talking about sea level rise and all the places in red in the next 100 years are going to be three feet over with water so all the red spots are going to be under water. You can see Florida is completely flooded out.

>> MOM: Ouch.

>> FEMALE SPEAKER: And down in Mexico is.

>> MOM: How many years is that?

>> FEMALE SPEAKER: About 100. The sea level rise will rise about three feet.

>> NANCY HOTCHKISS: We pair this with the ecohouse a lot because you've got here's the big global thing which can be a

little paralyzing and then you look at the success we have with the ecohouse and people go I could do that. I could do that. I could do that. Well those things all can have an impact on the bigger picture.

Do you grow vegetables or anything in the backyard?

>> DAD: We do tomatoes.

>> NANCY HOTCHKISS: So you can harvest your own vegetables. That helps the environment. Do you have a rain barrel to catch -

>> MOM: We have seven.

>> NANCY HOTCHKISS: You have seven rain barrels!?

>> MOM: Yes.

>> NANCY HOTCHKISS: Excellent. High five! I'm sure you're recycling.

>> MOM: Yes.

>> NANCY HOTCHKISS: And then a skylight and solar panels.

>> MOM: I've been lobbying for a skylight.

>> LAURA BANKEY: We have 1.4, 1.6 million visitors come through just our facility every year and they range from people that just want to see a shark or just want to see a dolphin to those that are really, really interested in the natural environment. They're interested in specific species and how they're doing in the wild. We want to move everybody towards those that are really invested in conservation knowing that everybody has to just take that one next step so we're here to help them take that one next step.

>> EVA HUGHES: And did I mention that I love sturgeons?

>> NANCY HOTCHKISS: The original Watershed Moments product that we developed has changed so what we've done is we have taken lessons learned and that's our sustainability for it. We are applying it in different formats because it still is about that behavior change. It's not about did we get this audience in here? Did we run the program three times a day? That shouldn't

be the sustainability measure for us. We're going for something bigger.